

THOROUGHFARE PLANNING
Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO)

Thoroughfare planning is a process used by public officials to assure the development of the most appropriate major street system to meet existing and future travel needs in an area. A Thoroughfare Plan provides a functional hierarchy of major streets that permits travel between origins and destinations with directness, ease and safety. Although all proposed changes to the Plan are anticipated to be needed in the future, the Thoroughfare Plan is *not* a promise to build roads. An imminent need for the road must occur and funding secured before the road can be built. When funding is secured for a road corridor, a more thorough study will occur, including environmental coordination and final changes in road alignment.

A **Thoroughfare Plan** is a planning tool designed to:

- ❑ Provide for the orderly development of an adequate major street system as land development occurs or as traffic increases
- ❑ Reduce travel and transportation costs
- ❑ Reduce the costs of major street improvements, mainly through coordination with private action
- ❑ Enable private interests to plan their actions, improvements, and development with full knowledge of public intent
- ❑ Minimize the disruption of people and business. Development can be prohibited in a road corridor, saving future disruption.
- ❑ Reduce environmental impacts on air-quality, wetlands, historic sites, parks and other publicly used recreational areas, archeological sites, endangered species, and neighborhoods

Thoroughfare Types

Different streets in the system are designed to perform specific functions, thus minimizing traffic and land use conflicts. Roads are categorized by function as minor thoroughfares, major thoroughfares, limited access thoroughfares, and freeways.

The four main thoroughfare types (and a proposed fifth type) and their design specifications are listed below:

Level	Name	Standard Right-of-way	Number of Lanes	Control of Access	Median	Left Turn Treatment at Signals	Numbered Route
1	Freeway/Expressway	350'	4 or more	Full or partial	Closed	NA	Always
2	Limited Access Thoroughfare	200'	4-6	Partial	>30' wide	1 or 2 lanes	Sometimes
3	Commercial Thoroughfare	150'	4-6	None	Always	1 or 2 lanes	Sometimes
	Major Thoroughfare (outside Rt.4) ¹	100'	4-6	None	Standard	1 or 2 lanes	Sometimes
	Major Thoroughfare (inside Rt.4)	80'	4	None	Optional	1 lane	Sometimes
4	Minor Thoroughfare (outside Rt.4)	70'	2-4	None	Rare	0 or 1 lane **	Never
	Minor Thoroughfare (inside Rt.4)	60' ***	2-3	None	Rare	0 or 1 lane **	Never
5	<i>Rail Frontage Road (proposed)</i>	≤ 60'	2-3	??	??	??	Never

Notes: ¹Route 4 makes a ring around the center of Charlotte and includes all or portions of Billy Graham Pkwy, Woodlawn Rd, Runnymede Lane, Sharon Rd, Wendover Rd, Eastway Dr, Sugar Creek Rd, and Interstate 85

* Standard Right-of-way may not provide adequate room for grade adjustment to surrounding elevations.

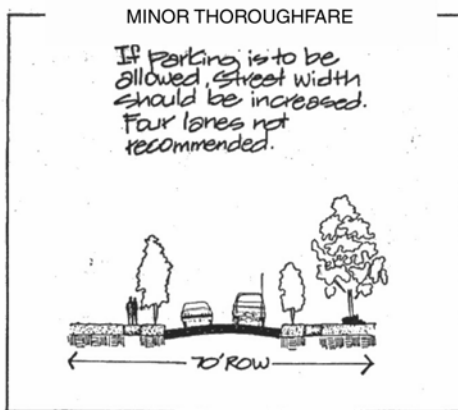
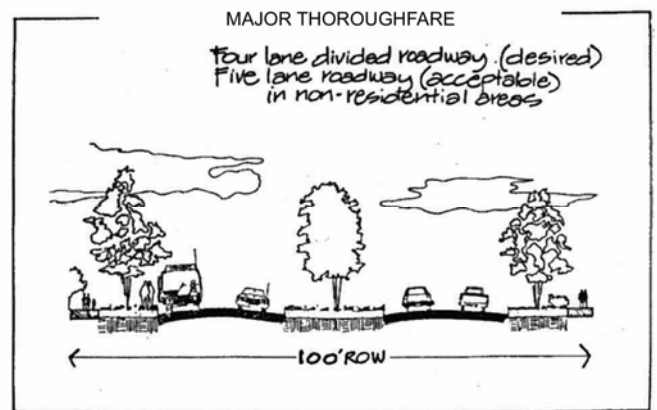
** At signals, left-turn lanes may not be needed on Minor Thoroughfares with a four lane cross-section or where left turns are prohibited during peak hours.

*** Except as noted on the Thoroughfare Plan.

LEVEL 1: Freeways/Expressways are multi-lane, grade-separated, limited access roads connecting this region, major activity centers or major roads with other regions, major activity centers or major roads. They are designed to accommodate large traffic volumes at high speeds. Such roads may be part of the Interstate, Federal or State primary highway systems. I-77, I-85, I-277, and I-485 are such roads.

LEVEL 2: Limited Access Thoroughfares are multi-lane, limited access major roads connecting major activity centers or major roads. They are designed to accommodate large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds. Intersections are at-grade with access only at cross streets rather than at individual driveways. All types of land uses are acceptable along these roads with proper consideration to environmental stresses related to the road. Portions of Harris Blvd West, US 521 (South of I-485), and Brookshire Blvd (NC 16) are examples of this type of thoroughfare in the Charlotte area.

LEVEL 3: Major thoroughfares are the primary traffic arteries of the area. Their main function is to accommodate large volumes of traffic at moderate speeds and provide access to major commercial, residential and institutional land uses. Statesville Road (US21), Fairview Road, and Pineville-Matthews Road are examples of major thoroughfares in the Charlotte area.



LEVEL 4: Minor thoroughfares are more important streets in the municipal system. They collect traffic from the local collector streets and carry it to the major thoroughfares. Minor thoroughfares are designed to carry moderate amounts of traffic at moderate speeds for moderate to short distances and provide access to low/medium density residential, commercial and institutional land uses. Huntersville-Concord Road, Kilborne Drive, Colony Road, and Archdale Drive are examples of minor thoroughfares in the Charlotte area.

LEVEL 5: Rail Frontage Roads are *not* currently part of the Thoroughfare Plan. However, they will be an important part of the road network because they would provide access to and from neighborhoods along the five Urban Area Transit Corridors and to the nearest thoroughfares. They are designed to carry moderate traffic volumes at low speeds.

